

El and the Mean Girls by kittenCorrosion

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Summary:

The mean girls come after El, so Mike goes after the mean girls.

Mileven Week Day 4 (Dec 1st)

"Mike defending Eleven"

El and the Mean Girls

Author's Note:

so mileven week isn't until the last week of november, but after i wrote this i loved it so much i just wanted to share... so consider it a preview or something, i dunno. i have like two more to write.

and i know el can take care of herself, but it's kinda satisfying to have mike do it. he pushes a girl tho whaaaaaat.

El glanced around the circle of girls nervously, unsure of what they wanted. They had won the spelling contest and were allowed to head out for recess ten minutes earlier than the boys, meaning her usual gang was still stuck inside the school, and El was alone.

They'd cornered her as she sat on the tire swing, waiting, and circled her without a word. She didn't really know any of their names, so far she hadn't been able to muster up the courage to try to be friends with anyone who wasn't Mike, Lucas, Dustin, or Will. But she knew most of them followed the brunette with the side ponytail around like she was their leader. Maybe she was... El still didn't quite understand this new world she had been unceremoniously dropped into. The world of girls and hierarchies.

Ms. Ponytail stepped forward towards El, glaring distrustfully. She popped the gum she'd been chewing obnoxiously and looked around at the circle of girls watching before focusing back on El.

"So... how come you won't talk to us, Baldy?"

The words hung in the air between them, and El's brows furrowed, confused. Baldy? Her hair was still closely cropped, a step-up from the buzzed look, but she was no means bald. She didn't understand what was happening and struggled to reply.

"I-I-I... I'm s-sorry." It was the best she could manage, her eyes now wide. She felt oddly.... ashamed. This was a new feeling. She didn't

like it. The ponytail was whipped from side to side and a disgusted gasp left the lips of the girl standing center.

"You should be. Who do you think you are, getting cozy with another girl's crush?" The words almost hissed from the girl's lips. El was even more confused. What was a crush? Why was she getting cozy with it? She held out her hands in a form of submission, shrugging apologetically, wanting this awkward confrontation to end already.

"I don't understand. What... what is 'crush'?" El looked around the circle for a single friendly face and was met with stony silence. The ponytail whipped again.

"Don't play stupid, Baldy, everyone knows that Tammy has a crush on Lucas," she stepped closer to El, getting up in her face, "and yet there you are, snuggling right in between those nerds."

El leaned away from this intrusion, almost falling out of the swing. She caught herself and hopped off, standing up to this new challenge, unsure. This was about Lucas? What about him? She certainly didn't snuggle with Lucas, that was usually reserved for Mike.

"Lucas, he's my friend." She said, thinking that would appease them. Instead, the circle of girls gasped. One of them, standing to the left of El sniffled, and Ponytail reached out to her.

"It's okay, Tammy, we won't let her get away with it," she said in a superior tone. The sniffing girl nodded and murmured a quiet "thanks Amanda".

Amanda turned back to her prey, sneering.

"See what you did? You must be as stupid as you are ugly, with that fluff on your head and your freaky eyes." She spat.

El bristled at the taunt, still unsure what was happening. These girls were mad at her for something she didn't understand and they were insulting her. She tensed and glared back at Amanda.

"Leave me alone." The words echoed around the circle, and El turned to leave, tired of whatever this confrontation was supposed to

be. The mean girl grabbed El's dress by the collar and pulled, the sound of tearing fabric ripping through the air. All of the girls gasped, and as El turned to face the bully, she exploded with rage. This dress had been a present from Joyce for her first day of school and this girl had just ruined it for no reason. El's hands clenched and she imagined ripping the ponytail right out by the roots, eyes glaring, her power throbbing in her temples.

"Hey! HEY! STOP!" The voice echoed across the playground and everyone froze. Looking past the girls in front of her, El saw Mike sprinting across the field as quickly as he could, arms flailing. He reached the circle, panting, but managed to break through to stand in front of El.

"Leave her... alone... Amanda," he said between gasps. The bully snorted, lifting a lip in disgust.

"Ew, Wheeler. Is she your girlfriend or something? What do you care?"

Mike reached back for El's hand, deliberately clutching it in his own, face flaming.

"What if she is? What do you care?" He mimicked.

The girls all stared at him in stunned silence, then began cackling all at once. They sounded like a pack of hyenas, closing in tighter. Amanda sneered again.

"I knew you were desperate, Wheeler, but I didn't think even you would want someone as ugly as Baldy," she chortled, "but I guess you've always been weird. At least we know you're not queer." The pack began laughing again, and Mike clenched his fist, anger bubbling over.

"At least she's not a two-faced, bra-stuffing, wastoid bitch like you!" He yelled into her face, pushing her so hard she fell onto her butt next to the tire swing. She looked up at him, a mix of terror and how-dare-you crossing her face, not believing he had pushed a girl. The circle fell silent, faces full of disbelief, and Mike reached out once again for El's hand, shouldering the girls out of the way and leading

her away from the whole scene. He guided her towards the teeter-totters, safely back in the sight of the teacher on duty. It was then he noticed she was crying, silent tears that splashed down her cheeks.

“El! Are you okay?” He checked her over for injuries, finding only the ripped collar, “Did they... did they hurt you?” She shook her head and pushed his searching hands away, sitting on the ground, chin on her knees, looking down. He plopped down next to her, wanting to reach out and comfort her but respecting her boundaries.

She cried quietly for a bit longer as they sat, but finally she sniffed and wiped her nose with her sleeve, breathing in shakily.

“Mike.” Her voice was quiet but full of misery. He tentatively reached his hand out and rubbed her back, reassuring her. “I’m... they said I’m ugly. Because... no hair?”

The hand not occupied reached up to touch the few inches of honey-brown hair that was slowly beginning to cover her head. It was at that awkward length where it couldn’t be tamed, no matter how many pins were put in or how much hairspray was applied. She hadn’t thought about it before, just happy she was allowed to grow her hair at all, but now she was self-conscious, smoothing it down incessantly. Mike loved her hair, it was soft like a baby chick, and when she would wake up from a nap and look at him drowsily, it would stick up all over.

“What?! El, no. You don’t need hair. Those girls...” he paused, trying to think of an easy way to describe it, then brightened when he thought of it, “they’re all mouthbreathers. Like when Troy and James hurt me. They’re trying to do the same to you.”

She sniffled, wiping her eyes and nodding, understanding his explanation. With a sigh she ran her fingers through her hair again, this time more gently, feeling better. She looked at Mike from the corner of her eye, seeing how desperate he was to cheer her up. He opened his mouth then shut it, then gathered up his courage and spoke.

“Besides... I-I think you’re pretty.”

Her heart sighed as he blushed and she wiped her nose one last time.

“Mouthbreathers?” She asked, almost cracking a smile. Mike grinned back at her.

“All of them. Every last one. Especially Amanda.” He snickered, and she nodded in agreement, reaching out to poke his knee affectionately.

“What are you guys doing?” El nearly jumped out of her skin as Dustin came up behind her. He took one look at her face and frowned.

“Holy shit, was El crying?” He asked, though it was obvious, and then reached into the pocket of his vest, offering her an opened roll of candies. “Here, you should have some Smarties.”

She took one gingerly, accepting his concern in candy form. Lucas and Will joined them, equally confused and concerned.

“What happened?” Will asked, his voice tight with worry as he sat down on the other side of El. He patted her shoulder reassuringly.

“The hyenas were trying to pick on El. I told Amanda where she could stick it, though.” Mike explained to them, not going too far into details.

“What were they bitching at her about?” Dustin asked, mouth full of Smarties. El spoke up this time.

“Lucas,” she said, and he looked at her, perplexed, “Tammy wants to... to crush Lucas?”

Dustin snorted out a laugh through his nose, then swallowed his Smarties and choked. Will hooted before he could stop himself, and Mike’s eyes flew wide. They all turned to look at Lucas, then burst out laughing, borderline hysteric. Lucas crossed his arms, trying to look unamused. El looked around at them, even more confused than she had been before. When the hooting and gasping had died down a bit she poked Mike inquisitively.

“Why? Why are you laughing?”

"Because apparently Tammy has a crush on Lucas and he can't stand her, oh my god," Dustin busted out, barely able to contain himself. Lucas uncrossed and recrossed his arms, still refusing to acknowledge any of his friends. El furrowed her brows.

"But what is.... what is 'crush'? Not like smash?" Mike had finally calmed down enough and took over explaining.

"No, Tammy has a crush on Lucas. A crush is someone you like, like a lot," he said easily, "not just as a friend but like, you want to hold hands with them and stuff." Her eyes brightened as she understood.

"And kiss!" She added, smiling. Mike's face flared, but he nodded in agreement.

"...And kiss. Sure."

The boys snickered again, but El didn't notice, instead leaning towards Mike, reaching out with one hand to grab his wrist, her eyes wide and honest.

"Mike," she said, her voice dead serious, "I want to crush you."

The hysterical laughing started over again, only this time aimed at Mike, who flushed even more intensely. Will was laying on the ground gasping he was laughing so hard. El giggled too, still not entirely sure what was so funny, but finding the boys laughter just as humorous. They were laughing partially at her error with the word, but also because they just couldn't seem to stop. After explaining to her a bit better, the friends spent the rest of recess trying not to look at each other, just a mere glance enough to set them off again. El forgot all about mean girls and what they had said.

As they headed back in, Mike came up beside her. Taking her hand in his, he leaned in close and whispered in her ear.

"I wanna crush you too."